

# The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust



## Policy and Procedure

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### Attendance Policy

Published: September 2023

To be reviewed: September 2024



# The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust



## Our Mission

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Outstanding Catholic education for all pupils. As a family of schools, we will enable our young people to develop spiritually, morally, intellectually and personally, putting their faith into action, through serving Christ in others, in the church and in the world around them.

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**This policy was approved by the Resources Committee on behalf of the Trust Board**

Signature: 

**Mrs Diane Gaskin  
Chair of the Trust Board**

Date: 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023

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## Definitions

**'BWCAT/We and Trust'** refers to The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust.

**'The Trust Board'** means the Board of Directors for the Trust.

**'Academy Council'** means local governing body of the individual school.

**'Governors'** means the governors appointed to the Academy Council of the individual school.

**'Headteacher'** means the lead person in each school, this includes the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/Head of School/Acting Headteacher.

**'Virtual School Head'** (VSH) means the lead person within the Local Authority for Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children.

**'Schools'** refers to all schools within BWCAT.

**'Pupil'** refers to any pupil on roll at any of the BWCAT schools.

**'Parents'** refers to any person who holds parental responsibility for the child.

**'child' and 'children'** refer to children and young people under the age of 18 years.

**'Staff'** means all employees, temporary, casual, agency and contracted staff working for the Trust, volunteers and consultants.

**'Session'** is a term related to the recording of absence data - every school day must have two **'sessions'** (morning and afternoon), divided by a break, for which attendance must be recorded.

**'Authorised absence'** means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

**'Unauthorised absence'** is where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for an absence.

**'Academic year'** means a school's academic year beginning with the first day of school after 31 July and ending with the first day of school after the following 31 July.

## SECTION A

### Purpose and Intent

We articulate this policy in accordance with the statutory guidance on Attendance in the DfE document, 'Working together to improve school attendance'

To ensure that every child attends, on time, every day possible so that they:

- Establish positive routines and attitudes towards their education from the earliest point
- Progress well academically and socially.
- Develop excellent habits for their next steps in education and their careers.
- Promote and support the safety and welfare of all pupils

### Aims

The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust (BWCAT) is committed to developing and maintaining an effective whole Trust strategy with regards to attendance and punctuality.

The DfE Working Together to Improve Attendance 2022 guidelines state that attendance "is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment."

BWCAT is committed to supporting the excellent attendance of all pupils.

Each academy within BWCAT will:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Publish and adhere to this attendance policy, and ensure all staff, pupils and parents are aware of this policy.
- Accurately complete admission and, attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools and Trusts in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

- Will take appropriate action in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare.
- Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.
- Ensure all staff are aware of their responsibilities with respect to Attendance and understand the correlation with safeguarding.

All schools within BWCAT aim to:

- Maintain a high level of attendance.
- Reduce to a minimum the number of authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Reduce to a minimum the number of pupils who are persistently absent.
- Ensure attendance procedures are effectively and consistently applied.
- Ensure safeguarding procedures are effectively and consistently applied.

BWCAT will work in partnership with parents/carers in promoting and encouraging 100 percent attendance and punctuality for all our pupils.

## **Legal duty**

Parents have a duty to ensure that their children receive full time education (the Education Act 1996). Legal action may be instigated against parents/carers whose child's attendance is at an unacceptably low level and where parents/carers are failing to fulfil their responsibility (section 444(1) and 1(a)).

In delivering this policy, we consider our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We must keep an admission register (the academy roll) in accordance with section 7 of the guidance. This must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the academy along with the date of admission or re-admission to the academy, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended.

In accordance with section 7 of the Working Together guidance; we recognise that a pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, applies.

Each academy is required to maintain an accurate register as a legal document on a session by-session basis.

We must take the attendance register at the start of each morning session of each academy day and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion we must record whether every pupil is

- present,
- attending an approved educational activity,
- absent,
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Our academies must preserve every entry in their attendance or admission register for 3 years from the date of entry.

Our academies code attendance in accordance with 'Attendance and absence codes' as set out in the DfE guidance paragraphs 203 – 276.

Registers are only amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it was taken and it was subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, our academies must ensure the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, and the date on which the amendment was made.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to contact the academy on the first and each subsequent day of absence unless a definite date of return is known. The academy will reach a decision whether the absence is authorised or not.

The academy will seek legal action through the local authority for continued poor attendance in accordance with the clear guidance and expectations as laid out in section 6 of the 2022 DfE guidance, and as part of their wider safeguarding duty outlined in KCSIE. This could result in a fixed penalty notice (FPN), or other sanctions being issued.

Within five school days of unauthorised absence depending on the circumstances of the absence a member of staff may carry out a home visit.

The academy may request medical evidence for an absence. We accept appointment card, letters, emails, text messages and doctors' letters.

### **Key Information for St Mary's Horsforth Catholic VA**

The school day starts at 8.50am and ends at 3.20pm

All absences should be reported by parents before 9.15am by ringing the school on 0113 2584593.

The school will always prioritise support over legal interventions. However, the school has a duty of care to inform parents that do not respond to the advice and support offered that the threshold for a referral to the local authority may be made.

The Senior Leader responsible for championing attendance is Mrs S Hurley and they can be contacted by email: [office@stmaryshorsforth.org](mailto:office@stmaryshorsforth.org), to discuss any absence concerns



## **SECTION B**

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Directors of the Trust Board:**

- The Directors of the Trust Board have overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory or Trust framework.
- Monitor progress in attendance indicators and practice to ensure these are embedded across the organisation.
- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction in attendance management.
- Hold executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils.
- Take steps to ensure the quality of education provision by overseeing standards and outcomes in attendance indicators across all academies within the Trust.
- The Directors have delegated day-to-day responsibility for operating the policy to, the CEO and the Headteacher of each academy.

#### **Academy Council:**

- The Academy Council have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy.
- Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their academy to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction in attendance management.
- Support academy leaders to drive improvements in attendance and ensure all pupils are receiving the quality of education through positive attendance, enabling them to be the best they can.
- Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.
- Review the effectiveness of the implementation of the policy in light of the school's termly reports.

#### **CEO and Central Team:**

- Devise and review the Trust Attendance Policy.
- Set and review the Trust level targets for attendance and punctuality, strategic plan and target setting process.
- Maintain an overview of attendance and punctuality across all academies providing targeted support and guidance where need is identified.
- Maintain an up-to-date knowledge of National statutory requirements, ensuring that we are fully compliant across the Trust.

- Provide accurate and evaluative reports to the Trust Board.

#### **Headteacher:**

- Ensure the school ethos promotes and celebrates good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure strategies are in place to promote and implement the Attendance policy throughout the school.
- Ensures all children access their full entitlement to high quality education.
- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for safeguarding and how this links with poor school attendance – ensuring compliance with Keeping children Safe in Education 2023.
- Developing appropriate support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND).
- Develops and maintains a positive culture across the academy where all staff understand the link between behaviour, attendance, and inclusion.
- Monitor the school's offer to ensure the delivery of a curriculum which is engaging and personalised to the needs of the pupils.
- Monitor data on attendance and punctuality via reports from the senior leader responsible for attendance.
- Determine, in collaboration with the senior leader responsible for attendance, whether to authorise any proposed absences requested on the academies official request form.
- Provide the Academy Council with termly reviews on attendance and punctuality, including data about pupils who are persistently absent (90% or below) or severely absent (50% or below). If attendance is highlighted through these reviews as an area to be monitored, it is recommended that a Governor from the Academy Council is appointed as Lead Governor for attendance, to meet the Headteacher or delegated senior leader and discuss the analysis of the data.
- Provide CEO/Executive Headteacher with termly reviews
- Set attendance targets during the appraisal process for the link senior leader, heads of year or other relevant members of staff directly associated with attendance performance measures, where appropriate.
- Ensures parents are fully informed of the academy expectations and requirements, through open and honest communication with staff, pupils, and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.

### Senior Leader responsible for attendance:

- Lead initiatives to promote the profile of attendance throughout the school including a package of rewards that is valued by pupils.
- With the support of the pastoral team (secondary) Headteacher (primary), interrogate and analyse data on attendance and punctuality on a weekly, half-termly, and termly basis and prepare reports, as required, for the pastoral team, senior leadership team and Academy Council.
- Oversight of data analysis -
  - ❖ Monitoring and analysing attendance data regularly to allow early intervention to address issues. This includes, communicating with families in the first instance, following up concerns with formal letters, raising concerns with other agencies like children's social care and early help services which are working with families.
  - ❖ Robust school systems are in place which provide useful data at cohort, group, and individual pupil level to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns amongst groups such as:
    - children who have a social worker including looked-after children
    - young carers
    - children who are eligible for free school meals
    - children who speak English as a second language
    - children who have special educational needs and disabilities
- Oversee the arrangements for pastoral / attendance review meetings and quality assure the action plans devised.
- Liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable. Where a young person has a social worker and does not attend school, contact must be made with the social worker to report the absence and recorded on school systems that the social worker has been informed.
- Ensuring a positive working relationship with the Local Authority School Attendance Service is fostered, including attending Attendance Targeted Support Meetings.
- Provide training for all staff to make an active contribution to improving attendance aligned to their role and responsibilities.
- Comply with the Department for Education Statutory Guidance on children who are absent from education for prolonged periods and/ or repeated occasions (KCSiE 2023) by informing the local authority of the details of children who are regularly absent, missing from school following a leave of absence and prior to removing a child from the roll of the school.
- Senior Leaders analyse and discuss attendance with all Class Teachers/ Heads of year's half termly.
- Comply with the requirements of a school for consideration of legal action by the Local Authority when requesting a legal intervention.

**Attendance officer/Administrator: (Within BWCAT Primary schools the Headteacher will have overall responsibility and delegate to staff when required)**

- Monitor attendance on daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and annual basis, contacting parents/carers of pupils who have been identified as at-risk, to challenge absences and encourage an early return to school.
- Ensure data on attendance and punctuality is displayed in prominent places visible to pupils.
- Where appropriate, visit the home and/or make a referral to the local authority's education attendance team. Undertaking home visits in line with school's safeguarding responsibilities to engage families and ensure children are safe.
- Discuss appropriate support for pupils for whom attendance and punctuality is a cause for concern.
- Manage the arrangements for pupils who need to attend appointments during school time.
- Work with the senior leader responsible for attendance to maintain an up-to-date attendance risk register and punctuality risk register of high-risk pupils in designated year groups.
- Lead or support pastoral / attendance review meetings and develop an action plan involving the child, parent/carer and, where appropriate, other agencies for pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality falls below the expected level.
- Co-ordinate the support plan for pupils returning to school after a prolonged absence.
- Co-ordinate the collation of all the documentary evidence required by the local authority for pursuing a legal intervention.
- Monitor registration on a daily basis and ensure any missing marks are quickly resolved to ensure pupils are safe.
- Be the first point of contact for parents/carers and relevant school staff regarding pupil absence and appointments.
- Collate and issue attendance and punctuality data on a daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and annual basis to the attendance officer/head of year and senior leader responsible for attendance.
- Maintain a record of all applications for leave of absence during term time and requests for issuing a penalty notice.

**Form tutors/class teachers responsible for registering morning and afternoon sessions:**

- Provide regular advice, encouragement, challenge and support to the class as a whole and individually to pupils about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality using the data provided by the administrative team.
- Ensure that the statutory attendance register is taken at the start of the first session of the school day and once during the second session. In secondary settings, for the purposes of safeguarding, registers should be taken at the beginning of each lesson.

- Ensure pupils' absence notes or verbal messages related to attendance and punctuality are provided to the administration team/pastoral team.
- Be alert and deal with any signs of disaffection which could result in poor attendance and punctuality and impact on learning and ensure this is recorded on the school management information system.
- Identify absence trends or concerns and raise with the relevant member of administration team/pastoral team staff.

### **Parents/carers:**

- Be aware that it is an offence for their child to be absent from school without a valid reason.
- Be aware that only the school can determine if an absence from school is 'authorised'.
- Ensure their child arrives at school on time, dressed in full uniform, ready and equipped to learn.
- Inform the school if their child is unable to attend, including the reason for absence and the expected date of return.
- Ensure that all appointments, where possible, are arranged after school.
- Avoid arranging holidays/leave during term time except in exceptional circumstances.
- Ensure that all requests for leave during term time are made by completing the 'Leave of Absence During Term Time Request Form' (**see Appendix 1**) where possible at least one month in advance.
- Be aware that for unauthorised absences, the academy reserves the right to apply to the local authority to issue a penalty notice (fine) or remove a child from the roll of the school.
- Work with the school and other partner organisations such as the LA to establish a shared understanding of perceived barriers to attendance, with a view to supporting their child to maintain full-time attendance at school.
- Keep in touch with the school and be open in communicating information that will help improve the quality and nature of support being provided.
- Ensure their child participates in all support programmes agreed by the academy.

### **Pupils:**

- Aim to achieve 100% attendance and punctuality by arriving to school on time every day.
- Come to school well prepared and with the right attitude; to enjoy and achieve.
- Be proud of achieving excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Be punctual to all lessons.

- Ensure they are registered for all timetabled lessons and inform the relevant member of staff if they are not able to be registered.
- Ensure all notes/appointment cards are passed to the relevant member of staff.
- Speak to the appropriate member of staff if there are any problems that may affect attendance, punctuality and/or learning.

## SECTION C

### Authorised and Unauthorised absences

We follow the guidance on persistent and severe absence as outlined in section 5 of Working Together. Authorised absence is where the academy accepts there is good reason for an absence.

Consideration for an authorised absence requires a written, or telephone communication, from the parent. Parents are asked to notify the academy as soon as possible. Children who return to school following an absence without an explanation will be deemed to have had an 'unauthorised absence' until a suitable explanation has been given. Absence is then coded according to the cause (**Appendix 2**).

Examples of absence that might be authorised are:

- An absence caused by genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.
- An absence for an agreed religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong.
- Family bereavement.
- Situations where the academy authorises absence, e.g., study leave, work experience, interviews, and special occasions such as theatre/sporting/musical performance.
- Medical appointments where proof is available.
- Suspension or Permanent Exclusion.

Where explanations are not forthcoming, the explanations are deemed unacceptable, or unreliable; these will be explored by the academy and, where appropriate recorded as 'unauthorised'.

Examples might include:

- shopping
- no school uniform to wear
- to do homework / coursework
- lateness
- holidays
- day trips
- birthdays

If an absence is deemed as unauthorised this may result in the issuing of a penalty notice (FPN) or other legal interventions outlined in section 6 of 'Working together to improve school attendance', including parenting contracts, education supervision orders and parenting orders.

We recognise that attendance below 90% is poor and a child below this figure is treated as a Persistent Absentee (PA) by all academies and the DfE (Department for Education).

## **SECTION D**

### **Severe absence**

Focused monitoring and intervention will be given to pupils who are absent from our academies for more time than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school).

These are classed as severely absent pupils. We recognise that these children may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. Our academy attendance teams will make this group a top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance for the pupil or a whole family plan.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, and the educational support have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, we recognise that it is likely to constitute neglect and would therefore be treated as a safeguarding issue.

In all cases, we expect our academies to make patterns of both persistent and severe absence a focus of their regular data monitoring and identify pupils and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible.

### **Family Holidays**

Parents/carers are not entitled to remove children from our academies for holidays during term time. Where parents consider that there may be exceptional circumstances, this should be submitted in writing, outlining the circumstances, to the Headteacher of the academy prior to booking to seek authorisation.

We do not authorise holiday absences unless the request meets the exceptional circumstances outlined below, the exceptional circumstances will only be granted at the discretion of the Headteacher.

These exceptional circumstances are:

- where families are service personnel.

- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.
- other compassionate circumstances that can be confidentially shared with the academy.

The application letter must outline precisely what the exceptional circumstances are.

**If you take your child on holiday during term time you may be liable for a penalty notice being issued with or without prior notice by parents/carers.**

## **SECTION E**

### **Addressing attendance and punctuality concerns**

Through working closely in partnership with parents/carers, we aim to establish positive routines for attendance and punctuality from the earliest age. Due to the established impact of lost education on progress and achievement, we will always provide comprehensive support to children and families to endeavour to overcome barriers, but we have a robust response where concerns emerge. These are set out in the bullet points and the BWCAT Attendance Interventions below.

It is important that children arrive at school on time to avoid missing key learning, information and the impact on routines and relationships. Considering all the above, and in circumstances where it is justified, failure to co-operate with an outside agency could lead to the Local Authority prosecuting parents of children with poor attendance.

### **Procedure for Tracking and Improving Attendance**

Each academy will have a robust day to day processes in place to track and follow up absence and poor punctuality. The attendance officer or administrator is responsible for tracking school attendance daily, weekly, half termly, and yearly. The Headteacher provides half termly reports to the Academy Council.

The attendance officer/administrator also provides an attendance report in which they outline the work the academy has been doing with families and the impact this has had. If a child's attendance becomes erratic or falls below 90% a referral would may be made to relevant agencies. The CEO collects half termly attendance figures and will report to the Trust Board.

The school has robust procedures in place for reducing persistent and severe absence. The Academy will support families and offer internal support as well as make external referrals to agencies, in conjunction with parents e.g., School Nursing, Early Help Hub to remove



barriers to attendance and provide the necessary support to ensure their child attends school every day.

- Send a 'Priority 1- Attendance Communication' communication which informs parents that their child's attendance has fallen below 90% (minimum national school attendance level) and is being closely monitored to ensure they do not become a persistent absentee.
- Send a 'Priority 2 - Attendance Communication (Advice)' communication which informs parents that their child's attendance has shown no improvement since the last half term or is consistently causing concern, after being closely monitored. The academy to monitor the pupil's attendance for the next 10 school days.
- Send a 'Priority 3 – Attendance Communication (Support)' communication which informs parents that their child's attendance has shown no improvement following the 10-day monitoring period. The academy to arrange a focus meeting and a plan put in place to support the pupil and their family to remove barriers and access support to improve attendance and punctuality. The academy to monitor this support plan for the next 10 school days.
- Send a 'Priority 4 – Attendance Communication (Warning)' communication which informs parents that their child's attendance has shown no improvement following the implementation of the support plan and the 10-day monitoring. The academy to monitor the pupil's attendance for the next 10 school days. The warning letter must inform parents that if attendance does not improve a formal 'Attendance Panel Meeting' will be held.
- Send a 'Priority 5 – Attendance Communication (Formal Attendance Panel Meeting)' communication which informs parents that an attendance panel meeting will be held. It is the responsibility of the academy to form the attendance panel meeting, a member of SLT must chair the meeting. Attendees to include parents, the pupil (if appropriate) and other agencies involved. At the start of the meeting parents MUST be informed that the meeting is part of a formal attendance procedure which could lead to legal intervention by the Local Authority. Support plan formulated in the meeting, if actions signed and agreed this is a parenting contract. Academy to monitor for 10 school days, if no improvement or engagement then the academy will contact the Local Authority for consideration of statutory intervention by the Local Authority.
- Send a 'Priority 6 – Attendance Communication (Sanction – PACE Formal Meeting)' communication which informs parents that their child's attendance has shown no improvement following the implementation of the formal support plan. The academy to liaise with the Local Authority to enforce statutory intervention, which

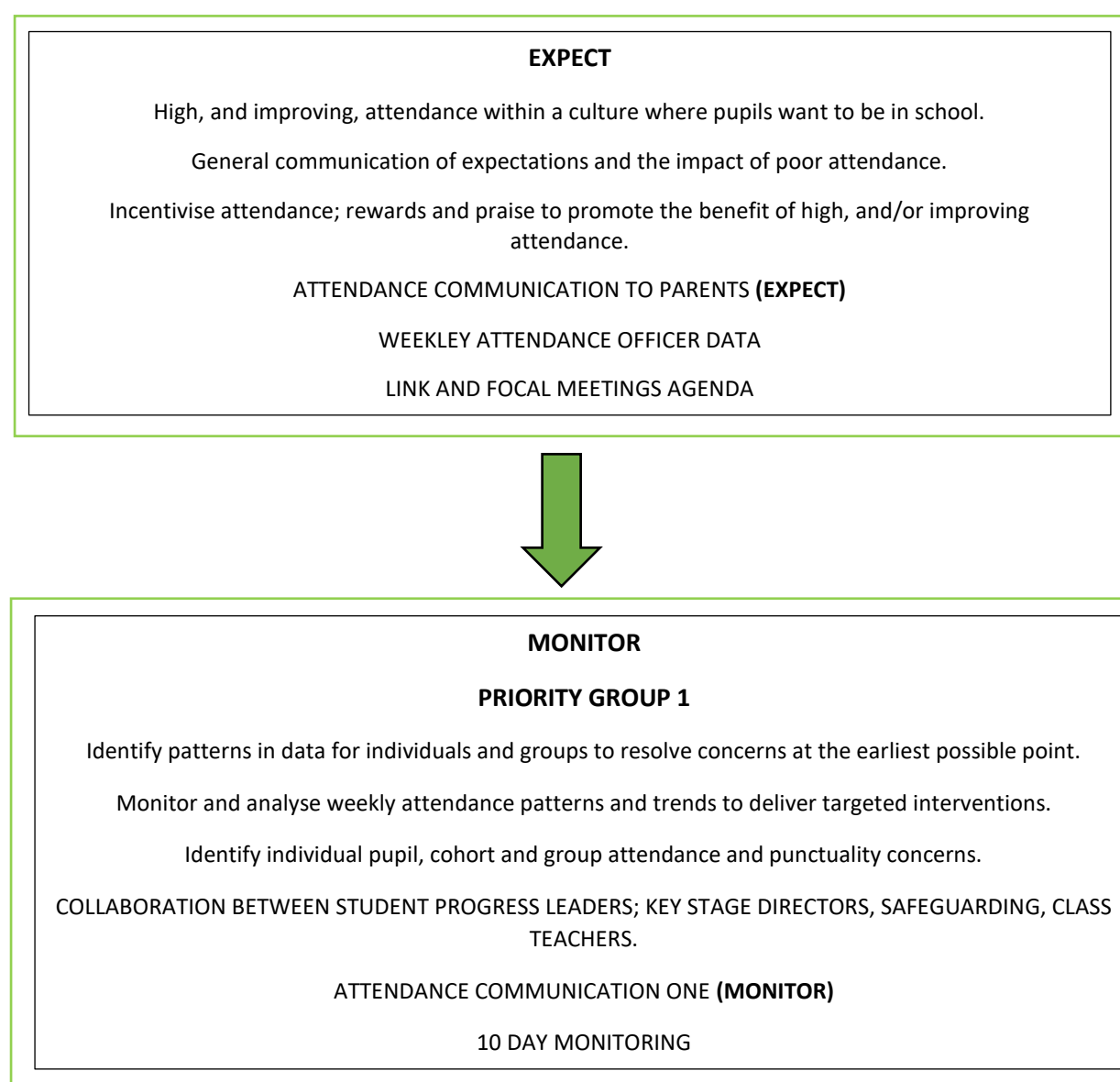
may include prosecution, Fixed Penalty Notices or other sanctions. Safeguarding concerns to be reported to Children Social Care.

Academies to retain clear records of interventions and support put in place during the first five stages detailed above. This documentation will be required as evidence at a PACE meeting. Documents from the formal attendance panel meeting must always clearly indicate the possibility of legal action being pursued against parents as an outcome.

### **BWCAT Attendance Interventions**

Successfully treating the root cause of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families.

St Mary's Horsforth CVA will collaboratively address the causes to remove barriers with partners and families by doing the following:





**LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND**

**PRIORITY GROUP 2**

Discuss barriers to attendance and agree how to work together to resolve them with additional support.

Build positive relationships between home and school addressing concerns with dignity and respect.

ATTENDANCE COMMUNICATION TWO (**ADVICE**)

10 DAY MONITORING



**FACILITATE SUPPORT**

**PRIORITY GROUP 3**

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents access support.

Focus groups to support individual pupil, cohort and group attendance and punctuality

ATTENDANCE COMMUNICATION THREE (**SUPPORT**)

10 DAY MONITORING



**WARNING**

**PRIORITY GROUP 4**

The warning letter must inform parents that if attendance does not improve a formal 'Attendance Panel Meeting' will be held.

ATTENDANCE COMMUNICATION FOUR (**WARNING**)

10 DAY MONITORING



**FORMAL ATTENDANCE PANEL MEETING**

**PRIORITY GROUP 5**

Communication which informs parents that an attendance panel meeting will be held.

Support plan formulated in the meeting, if actions signed and agreed this is a parenting contract.

**ATTENDANCE COMMUNICATION FIVE (FORMAL)**

10 DAY MONITORING



**PACE FORMAL MEETING**

**PRIORITY GROUP 6**

The academy will liaise with the Local Authority to enforce statutory intervention, setting out clearly when and how attendance legal intervention will be used.

Enforcement through statutory intervention, prosecution, Fixed Penalty Notices or other sanctions.

Safeguarding concerns referred to Education Safeguarding team for s.17 or s.47 involvement.

**ATTENDANCE COMMUNICATION SIX (SANCTION)**

**Day to Day (including unexplained absences and Child Missing Education):**

- Make an initial response (ranging from: text message, telephone call and/or home visit) on the first day of absence. When a home visit is made, a calling card will be left to make the parents aware a member of staff has visited their house.
- The academy will endeavour to make all reasonable enquires to ascertain the whereabouts of the child and the reason for absence, as above. If the academy fails

to make any contact with the parents, a member of staff may conduct home visits, contact the Police or Children's Social Care to complete a safe and well check.

- In exceptional circumstances, where concerns are raised, a referral to Children's Social Care may also take place.

### **Weekly:**

- Analysis of all absence and attendance codes for monitoring purposes.
- Analysis of the Late Log detailing all late children. (Both before and after registration closes).
- Phone calls and/or meetings, as required, to discuss individual circumstances, including lateness and/or absence.

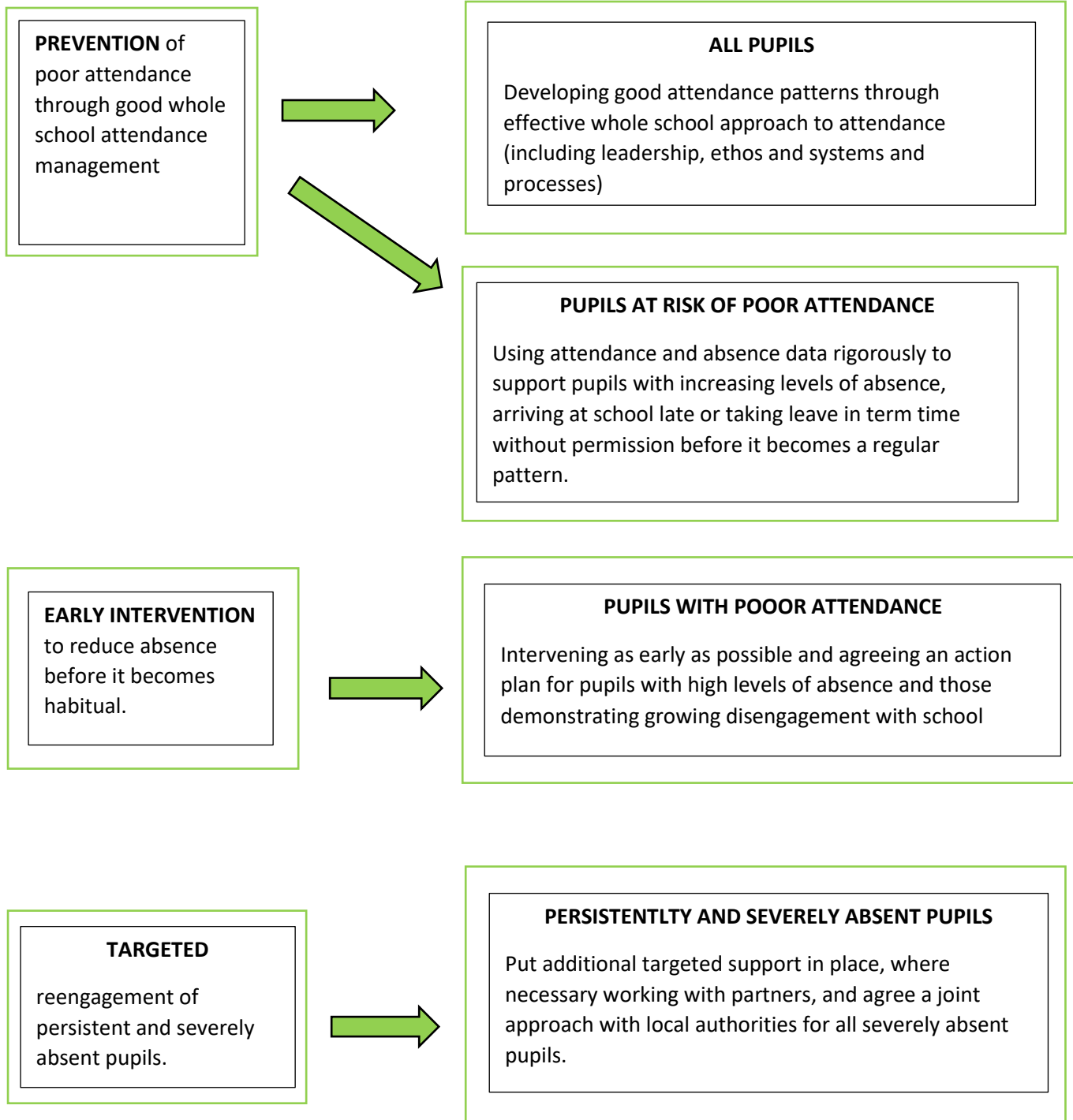
### **Half-termly**

- Meetings to discuss pupils' attendance.
- Attendance data is reported to the CEO for analysis, the CEO will present reports to the Trust Board for review.
- Attendance data is reported to the Academy Council (summary of statistics analysed for monitoring, assessing targets and implementing improvement), covering:
  - Whole school attendance
  - Age related attendance (year group)
  - Persistent absenteeism
  - Analysis of groups of learners e.g., SEND

### **Yearly:**

- During various points throughout the year, school attendance is reported through the School Census.
- Attendance data is reported to the CEO and Trust Board for analysis.
- Attendance is reported to all parents within their 'End of Year Report'.
- A Yearly Attendance Summary is reported to the Academy Council (summary of statistics analysed for monitoring, assessing targets and implementing improvement), covering:
  - Whole school attendance
  - Age related attendance (year group)
  - Persistent absenteeism
  - Analysis of groups of learners e.g., SEND

## Effective School Attendance Improvement and Management



*DfE Guidance - Working together to improve school attendance.*

## SECTION F

### Rewards and recognition

We recognise the importance of acknowledging and celebrating good attendance however we also do not penalise children who have been unable to attend due to medical conditions, illness, or other exceptional circumstances. We also value where attendance has shown sustained improvement over time.

Individual attendance targets and rewards are agreed for some children working with designated staff in the respective academy.

Special recognition is usually given to good attendance, individually, in class, year group or whole academy assemblies.

### Part-time timetables

We recognise that in very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs.

This will usually be because of an outcome of a SEND review, PEP review in the case of a Looked After Child, a Team Around the Child (TAC) or Early Help Assessment (EHA), and only when other options have been explored.

Statutory Guidance on the use of part-time timetable and exclusions is very clear:

*“In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual need. For example, where a medical condition (including a mental health condition) prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a reintegration package. A part-time timetable must not be a long-term solution.*

*Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time-limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision.”*

We recognise that a pupil should not be put on a part-time timetable purely because of their special educational need as this may constitute discrimination.

Part-time timetables will only be used in very limited circumstances for pupils not able to attend school on a full-time basis, for example:

- Where there are behaviour difficulties, and the academy is using a part-time timetable as an intervention to avoid exclusion, part of a pastoral support plan (PSP) or a planned reintegration package.
- Where a pupil has a short-term medical condition that prevents full time attendance for a time limited period.

It does not refer to pupils whose curriculum has been modified but are still attending.

Part-time timetables are used to enable our academy leaders to address pupils' social emotional mental health needs with the goal of reintroducing them to full time learning. They are only in place for the shortest time necessary and must not be treated as a long-term solution. A clear time scale should therefore be identified on the plan. We work towards full re-integration at the earliest opportunity – depending on the circumstances and at the professional judgement of the Headteacher, this may be done incrementally by increasing the contact over time.

Objectives of a part-time timetable should be clearly understood and **agreed** from the outset by all stakeholders and reviewed at least fortnightly in partnership with parents and pupils. A parent/carer must consent to the part-time timetable and be clear that they are taking responsibility for the child when they are not in school.

When considering or implementing a part-time timetable we take into consideration the wider safeguarding implications for the child.

We ensure that a pupil absent, under these conditions, has their absence recorded as authorised.

### **Children who cannot attend school because of health needs**

The Government's policy intention is that all children, regardless of circumstance or setting should receive a good education to enable them to shape their own futures. Therefore, alternative provision and the framework surrounding it should offer good quality education on par with that of mainstream schooling, along with the support pupils need to overcome barriers to attainment.

This support should meet a pupil's individual needs, including social and emotional needs, and enable them to thrive and prosper in the education system.

The Government has issued statutory guidance which Local Authorities (LAs) must have regard to when carrying out their duty to arrange suitable full-time education (or part-time when appropriate for the child's needs) for children who are unable to attend a mainstream school because of their health. This duty applies to all children and young people who would normally attend mainstream schools, including academies, free schools, independent schools and special schools, or where a child is not on the roll of a school. It applies equally whether a child cannot attend school at all or can only attend intermittently.

LAs are responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for permanently excluded pupils from the 6<sup>th</sup> day, and for other children who – because of illness or other reasons –



would not receive suitable education without such provision. This means that where a child cannot attend school because of health problems, and would not otherwise receive a suitable full-time education, the LA is responsible for arranging provision and must have regard to this guidance.

There will be a wide range of circumstances where a child has a health need but will receive suitable education that meets their needs without the intervention of the LA – for example, where the child can still attend school with some support; where the school has made arrangements to deliver suitable education outside of school for the child; or where arrangements have been made for the child to be educated in a hospital by an on-site hospital school.

The Government would not expect the LA to become involved in such arrangements unless it had reason to think that the education being provided to the child was not suitable or, while otherwise suitable, was not full-time or for the number of hours the child could benefit from without adversely affecting their health. This might be the case where, for example, the child can attend school but only intermittently.

Further information for families can be found in the BWCAT Supporting Pupils with Health Needs who cannot Attend School.

### **Re-integration of pupils following long term absence**

Each academy recognises the key role it can play in ensuring the successful reintegration of pupils returning after a prolonged period of absence.

The academy will work in partnership with parents/carers and external agencies (if appropriate), to assist a smooth reintegration back into school ensuring a flexible approach to meeting the pupil's needs.

All relevant staff will be informed of the child's circumstances, where necessary and a member of staff will be nominated to oversee the pupil's return.

The pupil's peers will also be included to ensure they welcome the pupil back to school and support the reintegration process.

### **Children Missing in Education (CME)**

Children Missing in Education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not on a school/academy roll and who are not receiving a suitable alternative education (for example at home). These children may be at a greater risk of harm. The Local Authority's Education Welfare Service is responsible for monitoring and tracking young people who are not in the education system, and for supporting their entry into a school/academy.

A child going missing from education, which includes within the school day, is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation. Unauthorised absences will be monitored and followed up in line with the academy's attendance procedures, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions. All staff are aware of the signs of risk and individual triggers including travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage.

All pupils will be placed and removed from admission and attendance registers as required by law.

The academy will collect, where possible, at least two emergency contact numbers for each pupil. The academy will inform the local authority of any child removed from the academy's admission register. The academy will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend for a continuous period in line with the local authority's procedures.

If a child goes missing from education the academy has a responsibility to make reasonable enquiries to find the child. If they are unable to do so they should refer to the Local Authority's CME Officer in the Education Welfare Service.

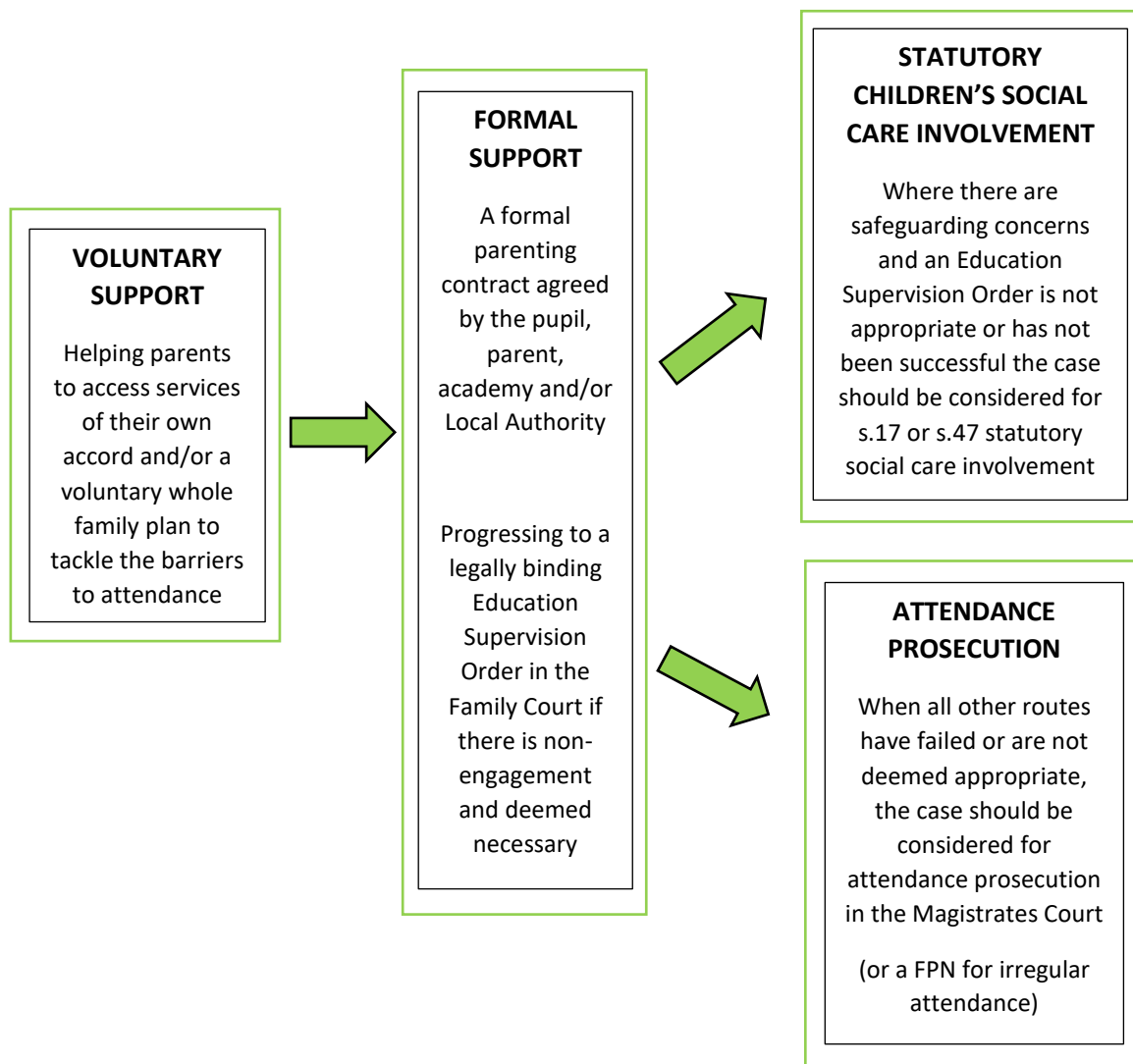
Including day to day attendance procedures, as well as cases of CME, the academy will:

- Make an initial response (ranging from: text message, telephone call and may conduct a home visit) on the first day of absence. When a home visit is made, a calling card will be left to make the parents aware a member of staff has visited their house.
- Endeavour to make all reasonable enquires to ascertain the whereabouts of the child and the reason for absence, as above. If the academy fails to make any contact with the parents, a member of staff may telephone Children's Social Care or the Police to complete a safe and well check.
- In exceptional circumstances, where concerns are raised, a referral to Children's Social Care may also take place.
- Inform the local authority if any child is absent for 10 consecutive school days and no reasonable explanation has been provided.
- Inform the local authority of any child removed from the academy's admission register. Schools must follow their Local Authority guidance for CME and also the DfE 'Children Missing in Education' guidance 2016

## SECTION G

### Legal Interventions

As absence is often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing, the Trust and its academies will work together with the Local Authority to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupil's right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents.



*DfE Guidance - Working together to improve school attendance.*

The academy, via the local authority, may exercise its legal powers to address poor attendance in school. These powers include:

**Penalty Notices:** Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 allows penalty notices (fines) to be issued to parents/carers. They are an alternative measure to the prosecution of parents/carers who fail to ensure that their child attends school. A penalty notice will be issued by the local authority in line with its code of conduct when a child's absence has not been authorised by the school. This is issued to any adult with parental responsibility for each child. The penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 per parent/carer per child if paid between 21 and 28 days. If one or both parents/carers fail to pay the penalty notice in full, then the local authority may decide to prosecute the parents/carers.

**Prosecution:** If a child fails to attend school regularly at which they are registered then the parents/carers may be guilty of an offence and may be prosecuted by the local authority. They have the power to prosecute parents/carers who fail to comply with a school attendance order under section 443 of the Education Act 1996 or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at a school under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The fines available to the courts if the parents/carers are found guilty could be between £1000 and £2500. The courts can also sentence parents/carers for imprisonment for up to 3 months

**Education Supervision Order (ESO):** This is an action plan that would be overseen by the high or Family Court. Non-compliance with the directions given in an ESO can lead to a fine of up to £1000.

**Parenting Order:** The order requires a parent to comply with the arrangements specified in the order by the Court which can include a requirement for parents to attend counselling or guidance sessions (e.g. parenting education or parenting support classes) where they will receive help and support to enable them to improve their child's attendance for up to 3 months. Any breach of the order can lead to a fine of up to £1000.

## **Policy review**

This policy will be reviewed by the CEO and Head of Governance in consultation with Headteachers and staff within the academies. The policy will be reviewed annually and approved by the Trust Board.

## SECTION H

### Appendix 1

#### Leave of Absence Request

|  |                    |                                 |                    |
|--|--------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>SCHOOL:</b><br>ST MARY'S HORSFORTH CVA  |                    | <b>DATE OF REQUEST:</b>         |                    |
| <b>First Name</b>  | <b>Surname</b>     | <b>Date of Birth</b>            | <b>Class</b>       |
|  |                    |                                 |                    |
|  |                    |                                 |                    |
|  |                    |                                 |                    |
|  |                    |                                 |                    |
| <b>Leaving date:</b>   |                    | <b>Date due back in school:</b> |                    |
| <b>Length of absence applied for (number of school days only):</b>   |                    |                                 | <b>days</b>        |
|  |                    |                                 |                    |
| <b>Siblings in other schools: Please note this request information will be shared with the attendance lead in the school in which the sibling/s attend</b> | <b>First Name</b>  | <b>Surname</b>                  | <b>School</b>      |
|  |                    |                                 |                    |
|  |                    |                                 |                    |
|  |                    |                                 |                    |
|  |                    |                                 |                    |
| <b>Contact Details</b>   |                    |                                 |                    |
| <b>Parents:</b><br>(e.g. Mother, Father, Grandparent, Carer):  | <b>First name:</b> |                                 | <b>First name:</b> |
|  | <b>Surname:</b>    |                                 | <b>Surname:</b>    |

|   |  |                                       |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|
|   | <b>Address:</b>                            | <b>Address:</b>                       |
|   | <b>Postcode:</b>                           | <b>Postcode:</b>                      |
|   | <b>Email:</b>                              | <b>Email:</b>                         |
|   | <b>Home phone number:</b>                  | <b>Home phone number:</b>             |
|   | <b>Mobile:</b>                             | <b>Mobile:</b>                        |
|   | <b>Alternative number while away:</b>      | <b>Alternative number while away:</b> |
|   |  |                                       |
| <b>Reason for absence including full explanation (use a separate sheet of paper if necessary)</b><br>The exceptional circumstances are... |  |                                       |
| <b>Point of departure (e.g. Airport, Coach, Train Station etc.):</b>  | <b>Destination:</b>                        |                                       |
| <b>Time of departure:</b>   | <b>Flight numbers and name of airline:</b> |                                       |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Emergency Contact Details (preferably someone who is staying in Leeds):</b></p> <p><b>First Name:</b></p> <p><b>Surname:</b></p> <p><b>Address:</b></p> <p><b>Postcode:</b></p> <p><b>Relationship to the child:</b></p> <p><b>Contact Number:</b></p> | <p><b><u>*Provide copies of travel plans to support your request.*</u></b></p> <p>If child is not leaving with parent(s) who is accompanying them?</p> <p>Who will be caring/responsible for the child?</p> <p>Why is/are the parent(s) not leaving with the child?</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Relationship to child:</p> <p>Address:</p> <p><u>Postcode :</u></p> |
|--|---|

### Statutory Declaration

#### Legal responsibility

***As a parent/guardian I understand all children aged between 5 and 16 are required by law to receive an education, and under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, it is my responsibility as a parent to ensure the regular school attendance of my children and that failure to do so could result in legal proceedings being taken by the Local Education Authority.***

*I understand that requests for leave can only be granted by schools if there are **exceptional circumstances**, and **holidays are not considered exceptional**. They must also be made to the school in advance, as the **Department for Education** has told schools that they cannot authorise any absences after they have been taken.*

#### **Fines**

*I understand if my request is unauthorised I am most likely to be fined, **£60 per parent, £60 per child** (for example a family of 4 with 2 parents and 2 children will be fined a total of £240).*

*Once the penalty notice is issued, I have **21 days in which to pay the fine**. If I fail to pay in that time period, the fine **will double** and I then have **another seven days in which to pay**, taking the total time in which to make payment to 28 days.*

***If I fail to make payment after 28 days then the local authority has the power to prosecute me in the magistrate's court for the offence of failing to ensure my child attends school regularly. A guilty verdict at court can lead to a fine of up to £1000, and a criminal record which can affect employment opportunities.***

**School places**

***I am aware that a referral will made to the Local Authority Children Missing from Education Team (CME) if my request is unauthorised and my child hasn't returned to school on the agreed date. This can result in my child losing their school place.***

*I am also aware that there is a shortage of places in the area, so if my child loses their school place it could result in having to travel to a school out of area or my child without a school, being a detriment to their education and causing implications to my own employment.*

**Parent's Full Name:**

**Parent's Signature:**

**Date:**

**Parent's Full Name:**

**Parent's Signature:**

**Date:**

|  |  |  |  |                        |
|--|--|--|--|------------------------|
| <b><u>School Section</u></b><br>Any previous request    Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |  | <b>Is the requested absence during exams</b><br>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |  |                        |
| <b>Reason for refusal/Comments</b><br><br><br>   |  |  |  |                        |
| <b>Authorised</b> <input type="checkbox"/>   |  | <b>Approved</b>  |  | <b>for School days</b> |



|  |                     |  |                        |  |
|--|---------------------|--|------------------------|--|
| <b>Unauthorised</b> <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Not approved</b> |  | <b>for School days</b> |  |
| <b>Headteacher's Signature</b>               |                     |  |                        |  |

## Appendix 2

### Codes for marking attendance and absence

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and are used to collect statistics through the School Census system. The data helps schools, local authorities and the government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reason for, absence and the delivery of education.

| Category  | Relevant Regulation                    | Code | Code Meaning  |
|---|--|------|---|
| Present   | 6(1)(a)(i)                             | / \  | Present in school / = am \ = pm   |
|   | 6(1)(a)(i)                             | L    | Late arrival before the register is closed  |
| Absent  |  |      |   |
| Authorised Absence from School                            | 6(1)(ii), 6(1)(b), 6(2), 7(1) and 7(2) | C    | Leave of absence granted by the school  |
|   |  | H    | leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday granted by the school            |
|   |  | E    | Excluded but no alternative provision made  |
|   |  | I    | Illness (not medical or dental appointment)   |
|   |  | M    | Medical or dental appointment   |
|   |  | R    | Religious observance  |
|   |  | S    | Study leave   |
|   |  | T    | Traveller absence   |
| Unauthorised Absence from School                          | 6(1)(ii) and 6(3)                      | G    | Holiday not granted by the school or in excess of the period determined by the school |
|   |  | N    | Reason for absence not yet provided   |
|   |  | O    | Absent without authorisation  |
|   |  | U    | Arrived in school after registration closed   |
| Attending another school at which the pupil is registered | 6(1)(a)(iii) and 6(4)(b)               | D    | Dual registered at another school   |

|  |   |          |   |
|--|---|----------|---|
| <b>Attending an educational activity that takes place outside the school</b> | <b>6(1)(iii), 6(1)(c) and 6(4)(a)</b>               | <b>B</b> | <b>Off-site educational Activity</b>  |
|  |   | <b>J</b> | <b>At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment</b> |
|  |   | <b>P</b> | <b>Participating in a supervised sporting activity</b>                                  |
|  |   | <b>V</b> | <b>Educational visit or trip</b>  |
|  |   | <b>W</b> | <b>Work experience</b>  |
| <b>Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances</b>                     | <b>6(1)(iv), 6(1)(d), 6(5), 6(7) and 6(2)(b)(i)</b> | <b>Y</b> | <b>Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances</b>                                |
| <b>Administrative codes</b>  |   | <b>X</b> | <b>Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school</b>                     |
|  |   | <b>Z</b> | <b>Prospective pupil not on admission register</b>                                      |
|  |   | <b>#</b> | <b>Planned whole or partial school closure</b>  |

*DfE Guidance - Working together to improve school attendance.*

The 13 schools in our Trust:

[St. Mary's Menston](#), a Catholic Voluntary Academy

[St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School Otley](#), a Voluntary Academy

[Ss Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School](#), a Voluntary Academy

[Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Ilkley](#), a Voluntary Academy

St Mary's Horsforth Catholic Voluntary Academy

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School Pudsey, a Voluntary Academy

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Harrogate, a Voluntary Academy

St Mary's Catholic Primary School Knaresborough, a Voluntary Academy

St. Stephen's Catholic Primary School and Nursery, a Voluntary Academy

Holy Name Catholic Voluntary Academy

St Roberts Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

St John Fisher Catholic High School Harrogate, a Voluntary Academy

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Tadcaster, a Voluntary Academy



## The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust

The Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust is a charity and a company limited by Guarantee, registered in England and Wales.

Company Number: 8399801

Registered Office:

St. Mary's Menston,

A Catholic Voluntary Academy

Bradford Road

Menston, LS29 6AE

Website: [bishopwheelercatholicacademytrust.org](http://bishopwheelercatholicacademytrust.org)

Tel: 01943 883000

Email: [j.johnson@bwcat.org](mailto:j.johnson@bwcat.org)

Chair of the Trust Board: Mrs Diane Gaskin